United Nations S/PV.7415

Security Council

Seventieth year

Provisional

7415th meeting
Thursday, 26 March 2015, 10 a.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Delattre	(France)
Members:	Angola	Mr. Gaspar Martins
	Chad	Mr. Cherif
	Chile	Mr. Barros Melet
	China	Mr. Wang Min
	Jordan	Mrs. Kawar
	Lithuania	Mr. Baublys
	Malaysia	Mrs. Adnin
	New Zealand	Mr. McLay
	Nigeria	Mr. Laro
	Russian Federation	Mr. Iliichev
	Spain	Mr. González de Linares Palou
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Griffiths
	United States of America	Mr. Pressman
	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	Mr. Ramirez Carreño

Agenda

The situation concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (S/2015/172)

Report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the region (S/2015/173)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the translation of speeches delivered in other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-0506 (verbatimrecords@un.org). Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (http://documents.un.org).

15-08499 (E)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (S/2015/172)

Report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the region (S/2015/173)

The President (*spoke in French*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2015/209, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by France.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2015/172, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, as well as to document S/2015/173, containing the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the region.

The Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Angola, Chad, Chile, China, France, Jordan, Lithuania, Malaysia, New Zealand, Nigeria, Russian Federation, Spain, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)

The President (*spoke in French*): There were 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 2211 (2015).

I now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements after the vote.

Mr. McLay (New Zealand): New Zealand welcomes the adoption of resolution 2211 (2015) and thanks France for its constructive and inclusive leadership, which secured agreement on the text.

New Zealand strongly supports the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) and its Force Intervention Brigade, as well as the role MONUSCO continues to play in supporting the Democratic Republic of the Congo as it hopefully enters a period of stability, lasting peace, increased prosperity and security.

The inclusion of the Force Intervention Brigade in the MONUSCO mandate makes this a special and unusually complex operation. In the context of this latest mandate renewal, it was with those special characteristics in mind that New Zealand proposed a strengthened oversight mechanism in respect of MONUSCO's operations to neutralize armed groups. We therefore welcome what has now been agreed in that regard — more targeted 90-day reporting, together with a new commitment from the Department of Peacekeeping Operations to provide regular informal briefings on MONUSCO's operations to Council members and troop-contributing countries (TCCs) alike.

Once it has performed its Charter function of mandating any peacekeeping operation, the Council must then perform an oversight role in respect of those operations. It is crucial that, in that role, it be both engaged and responsive. We seek to make the right decisions in the Council Chamber, but it is equally important that, having made those decisions, we then follow through on how they are being implemented in practice. We owe that to the troops charged with implementing such mandates, and we owe it to the civilian populations they are tasked to protect. It is crucial that we approach that oversight with a supportive and proactive mindset. New Zealand will therefore actively participate in these Council briefings, and if the better flow of information identifies significant risks to civilians or MONUSCO troops, will stand ready to promote any necessary Council action in response.

MONUSCO's very existence, let alone its ability to perform its tasks, is dependent on the willingness and the generosity of those countries that contribute their troops — the TCCs. We truly value the contribution of the TCCs, and we acknowledge the sacrifices they make in the full delivery of a mission's mandate and, in this case, in carrying out MONUSCO's top priority — the protection of civilians. We are therefore very pleased that we now have two new mechanisms that will more effectively monitor MONUSCO's distinct mandate. We will be active in assessing the effectiveness of those new mechanisms, and we commit to seeking out any other measures that might be required to enhance further the Council's very important oversight role.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Mr. Gata Mavita wa Lufuta (Democratic Republic of the Congo) (*spoke in French*): My delegation has already had the opportunity to congratulate you, Sir, on France's assumption of the presidency for March. We should like once again to commend your leadership and express our satisfaction at seeing you lead the Security Council's deliberations.

I also wish to reiterate to the Council the full gratitude of the people and the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo for the United Nations efforts to preserve the sovereignty and territorial integrity of my country and to ensure its peace and stability. I would further pay sincere tribute to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his ongoing concern and his personal involvement in peacebuilding in my country.

Be it with respect to the strategic review and the logical consequences to be drawn therefrom; the forced disarmament of the Rwandan rebels of the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda (FDLR); the evolution of the presence of Ugandan rebels of the Allied Democratic Forces—National Army for the Liberation of Uganda (ADF-NALU) in the north-east of the Democratic Republic of the Congo; or the political consequences of the end of the Mouvement du 23 mars rebellion, the position of my Government on these specific issues, as well as on the overall question of the relationship between the United Nations and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, was best expressed before the Council on Thursday, March 19 (see S/PV.7410), by His Excellency Mr. Raymond Tshibanda N'tungamulongo, Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, and I therefore do not intend to go over it again.

However, the situation on the ground has changed, dialogue between the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) has been restored, and the discussions that started here in New York continue in Kinshasa, as announced by the head of the Congolese diplomatic corps.

The Council has just renewed the mandate of MONUSCO for another year, until March 2016. We take due note of this, especially since the spirit and the text of resolution 2211 (2015) converge on the opening of a constructive dialogue between the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and MONUSCO, which we hope will help to effectively harmonize our respective points of view on issues that hitherto have not been clarified.

However, let me go over some passages of the text of the resolution that, in the opinion of my delegation, contain inconsistencies that cannot be explained in the light of current developments. I refer in particular to the eighth preambular paragraph, in which the Council claims, on the one hand, to recognize the efforts undertaken by the Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo in the neutralization of armed groups, including the FDLR, while at the same time it accuses that very same Congolese army of collaborating with the FDLR.

On a separate issue, my delegation remains convinced that a reference in paragraph 9 (f) to paragraphs 1 and 2 of resolution 1807 (2008) would have been necessary to circumscribe the scope of the arms embargo on the Democratic Republic of the Congo in order to avoid any confusion and eliminate once and for all the tendency to apply the embargo to the regular army, although it is intended to apply only to non-State armed groups and all negative forces, precisely in order to help the army to restore peace throughout the national territory.

Furthermore, the wording in paragraph 15 concerning the Congolese Rapid Reaction Force is also difficult to justify, especially since the Force has been trained and equipped with three brigades: the 11th Brigade, composed of three battalions trained with Chinese cooperation; the 21st Brigade, composed

of three battalions trained by South Africa; and the 31st Brigade, composed of three battalions whose troops have been trained with Belgian cooperation. These forces have been put to use in several previous pacification operations in North Kivu, and will soon be deployed in the pursuit of the FDLR in the Congolese forest.

Without overstating our concerns about the substance of the issues addressed in the text of the resolution, I would say in conclusion that my Government has taken note of them. I take this opportunity to assure the Council that we shall maintain our cooperation with the United Nations in the best interests of the Congolese people. Similarly, we intend to continue to work closely with the Council to launch a profound reflection on the future of the United Nations presence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and to establish the parameters and criteria that could determine the future of that presence on Congolese soil in a responsible and orderly manner that also honours and enshrines the immense sacrifices made by the United Nations and the international community to ensure the survivial of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The Government will do so in cooperation with the Council through existing mechanisms or by new mutual agreement.

Finally, I wish once again to congratulate MONUSCO, and the Force Intervention Brigade and its constituent countries in particular, for the high quality of their work throughout the mandate that has just come to an end. The work of the Brigade alongside the Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo has given us hope. We hope that the beginning of the new mandate of the Intervention Brigade will definitively crown the efforts already made to bring peace to the Democratic Republic of the Congo and throughout the Great Lakes region.

The meeting rose at 10.20 a.m.

United Nations S/PV.7416

Security Council

Seventieth year

Provisional

7416th meeting

Thursday, 26 March 2015, 10.20 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Delattre	(France)
Members:	Angola	Mr. Gaspar Martins
	Chad	Mr. Cherif
	Chile	Mr. Barros Melet
	China	Mr. Wang Min
	Jordan	Mrs. Kawar
	Lithuania	Mr. Baublys
	Malaysia	Mrs. Adnin
	New Zealand	Mr. McLay
	Nigeria	Mr. Sarki
	Russian Federation	Mr. Iliichev
	Spain	Mr. González de Linares Palou
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Wilson
	United States of America	Mr. Pressman
	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	Mr. Ramírez Carreño

Agenda

The situation in the Central African Republic

Letter dated 29 January 2015 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2015/85)

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15-08505 (E)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Central African Republic

Letter dated 29 January 2015 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2015/85)

The President (*spoke in French*): Members of the Council have before them document S/2015/210, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by France.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2015/85, which contains a letter dated 29 January 2015 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council.

The Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Angola, Chad, Chile, China, France, Jordan, Lithuania, Malaysia, New Zealand, Nigeria, Russian Federation, Spain, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)

The President (*spoke in French*): The draft resolution received 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 2212 (2015).

The meeting rose at 10.25 a.m.

United Nations S/PV.7417

Security Council

Seventieth year

Provisional

7417th meeting

Thursday, 26 March 2015, 10.25 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Delattre	(France)
Members:	Angola	Mr. Gaspar Martins
	Chad	Mr. Cherif
	Chile	Mr. Barros Melet
	China	Mr. Wang Min
	Jordan	Mrs. Kawar
	Lithuania	Mr. Baublys
	Malaysia	Mrs. Adnin
	New Zealand	Mr. McLay
	Nigeria	Mr. Sarki
	Russian Federation	Mr. Safronkov
	Spain	Mr. González de Linares Palou
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Wilson
	United States of America	Mr. Pressman
	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	Mr. Ramirez Carreño

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

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15-08511 (E)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.25 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

The President (*spoke in French*): In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Robert Serry, Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

As this is Mr. Serry's last last briefing to the Council in his capacity as Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, I should like to take this opportunity to warmly thank him for his outstanding service. The Council extends its gratitude to him and wishes him every success in his future endeavours.

I now give the floor to Ms. Serry.

Mr. Serry (*spoke in French*): I warmly thank you, Mr. President, for your kinds words. The past seven years have been an extraordinary experience for me that will remain with me for the rest of my life. I humbly and gratefully acknowledge the unique opportunity afforded me.

(*spoke in English*)

I brief the Council today against the backdrop of another month plagued by the brutality that continues to cause immense human suffering across the region. As this will be my last briefing, I intend to focus on my own mandate, while of course recognizing that the Arab-Israeli conflict is affected by the dramatic events in the region.

In any peace agreement Israeli security concerns will need to be seriously addressed. However, losing sight of reaching peace between Israel, Palestine and the wider Arab world altogether — I have repeatedly warned the Council that we may be heading in that direction — would be tantamount to pouring more oil on the regional flames. Conversely, real progress in achieving a two-State solution and ending the longest occupation in modern history would go a long way towards improving regional security and strengthening moderate forces in the region. In that regard, the Arab Peace Initiative still holds out the prospect of Israel normalizing its relations with the Arab and wider Muslim world, rather than isolating itself.

Let me first briefly update the on significant events during this reporting, period before sharing some parting thoughts based on my seven years of experience, which the Council may wish to consider.

On 17 March, general elections were held in Israel. We congratulate Prime Minister Netanyahu and the Likud party on winning the highest number of seats, and note that President Rivlin has invited him to form the next Government, a process that may take several weeks. However, I am frankly concerned by many of the hard-line statements put forward in the final days of campaigning, in particular remarks by the Prime Minister raising serious doubts about Israel's commitment to the two-State solution. I urge the incoming Israeli Government to seize the opportunity of a fresh mandate to quickly demonstrate in words and, more importantly by actions, that commitment.

Earlier this month, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) Central Council adopted a series of decisions, including "to suspend all forms of security coordination given Israel's systematic and ongoing noncompliance with its obligations under signed agreements." While noting that in three months' time the PLO Executive Committee will report back on the implementation of that decision, to date security coordination is continuing. That move may have far-reaching consequences and, along with the Palestinian accession to the International Criminal Court effective 1 April, it is yet another powerful sign of Palestinian determination not to return to the status quo.

We cannot run from reality. There is a genuine possibility that ending Palestinian security coordination with Israel may be the final nail in the coffin of the Oslo Accords. However, there is still time for parties to end the cycle of counterproductive action and counteraction.

With the third month of Israel's withholding of Palestinian tax revenues, now amounting to over $400 million, the Palestinian Authority's financial crisis is deepening. We are deeply concerned that, despite the announcement of an austerity budget for 2015, that temporary band-aid may not allow the Palestinian Authority to survive. Israel's action is in violation of the Paris Protocol of the Oslo Accords. We again call on Israel to immediately reverse its decision.

In Gaza, an equally destructive financial crisis, related to the lack of progress on civil service reform, continues to ratchet up tensions. It has been nearly five months since the United Nations facilitated a humanitarian payment to Gaza civil servants. I cannot help but feel that such a gesture may be needed yet again to sustain minimum conditions for stability until the parties have addressed the underlying issue.

In that regard, I welcome Prime Minister Hamdallah's second visit to Gaza this week and commend his continued efforts to find solutions for this and other critical issues, which will facilitate his Government's assumption of its rightful responsibility in Gaza. I also welcome last week's declaration of support by President Abbas and Hamas for the Swiss road map pertaining to the reintegration and reform of the public sector in Gaza. I would like to thank Switzerland for its committed efforts on that issue and urge the road map's swift implementation.

While the appalling situation in Gaza endures, there are some signs of progress. While not enough, the temporary Gaza Reconstruction Mechanism is making a difference. As of 23 March, almost 80 per cent of damaged shelters had been processed through the Mechanism, with over 61,000 individuals having procured construction materials to carry out their home repairs. In addition, the Mechanism is ready to process large-scale reconstruction. Over 40 international and private sector projects have been approved, and 5 are already under way — including Qatar's first major housing project to construct 1,000 housing units. I appreciate Israel's willingness to facilitate that process. I therefore encourage all international partners to take note that the Mechanism is working and to fully engage on Gaza reconstruction, in line with their pledges in Cairo last October.

The situation in the West Bank, including in East Jerusalem, remains tense. At practically every monthly briefing during the past seven years we have reported on negative developments. Those include the loss of lives and injuries resulting from demonstrations, inter-communal violence, often involving Israeli settlers, and Israeli search-and-arrest operations. We have also reported on security incidents, including, increasingly, so-called lone-wolf attacks. And the Secretary-General and I have firmly condemned acts of terror. I do not need to give the details to report that this month resembles the average from previous briefings, including on home demolitions — another disturbing trend. Numbers sometimes hide the grim reality of entrenched occupation leading to growing despair.

Neither did we fail to report to the Council more positive developments, in particular related to Palestinian State-building and the easing of Israeli restrictive measures. After a long-standing dispute, Rawabi has finally been connected to the water supply, thereby allowing families to begin moving into that modern Palestinian township near Ramallah. I also welcome recent Israeli steps to ease some of its restrictions on the movement of people and goods in the West Bank and Gaza. I only wish that I could have reported such positive news on a regular basis, and I urge Israel to expand upon those important initiatives.

Unsurprisingly, settlement planning and activity also continued this month, despite unanimous opposition from the international community. According to the Israeli non-governmental organization Peace Now, from January 2008 to January 2014 — or six of my seven years as Special Coordinator — the population in settlements in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, steadily increased by an estimated 16 per cent to a total of 551,500 persons — over half a million people. Some 16,500 new residential units were constructed in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem during that period.

Illegal settlement activity simply cannot be reconciled with the objective of a negotiated two-State solution, and may kill the very possibility of reaching peace on the paradigm of two States for two peoples. I frankly do not know if it is already too late. The minimum conditions of trust cannot be restored without the new Israeli Government taking credible steps to freeze settlement activity.

Allow me, in this final briefing, to share my parting thoughts.

Upon leaving this position, I cannot but express an overriding feeling that I have been part of a peace process in which a can is kicked down an endless road. During the past seven years, three United States-led peace initiatives remained inconclusive and did not bring us any closer to the urgently needed political foundation for a Palestinian State as part of a two-State solution. That is why the remarkable progress achieved in Palestinian State-building, pursued vigorously under the leadership of President Abbas and former Prime Minister Fayyad, has started to turn into a failed success. Moreover, all three stalled negotiations were

followed by wars in Gaza, leaving the Strip devastated seven months after the last war, as I observed during my last visit.

To seek to prevent yet another descent into conflict, I have publicly called for a new strategy prioritizing Gaza. By that, let me be clear: I do not mean "Gaza only." Neither I nor the United Nations would ever support a strategy that would seek to divide Gaza from the West Bank. Focusing support on Gaza must be inextricably linked to addressing the wider peace process.

Prioritizing Gaza means that we recognize that we cannot possibly hope to pick up the pieces of a shattered Israel-Palestinian peace strategy, leaving Gaza as it is. It means that we cannot possibly hope to again board the peace train in the West Bank and arrive in Gaza as a final stop. It means that we must fix Gaza — or at least stabilize it — so that we do not reconstruct it for a third time, only to see it destroyed again, and so that it does not halt peace efforts that aim to reach the long-desired two-State vision: Israel living side-by-side in peace and security with one single, unified State of Palestine. Prioritizing Gaza means for me achieving four main objectives urgently.

First, we need a more stable ceasefire under the umbrella of the Government of national consensus. I have called for a reconstruction *hudna*: a freeze of all military activities above and below ground over at least a three-to-five-year time frame. That would allow time and give donors confidence for the large-scale, accelerated reconstruction that Gaza desperately needs: major infrastructure projects, including housing; a gas pipeline, to generate inexpensive energy; and a desalination plant to address the chronic water shortages. Once those immediate needs are met, a next step would be to look into providing an opening to the world via a seaport.

Secondly, such a *hudna* can be sustainable only if Palestinians move towards real reconciliation. That has not happened yet. Clearly, it will not be an easy task. But what is the alternative? Empowering the Government of national consensus to take up its leadership role in Gaza is the only way forward. Bringing all the crossings in Gaza under the control of the consensus Government and reforming the civil service represent essential next steps.

Thirdly, all Gaza crossings need to be opened further to support the free movement of people and goods, including to reconnect the Strip and the West Bank and to enable exports.

And, fourthly, the international community must be prepared to fully support the Government of national consensus politically and financially. That includes acting on the commitments made at the Cairo Conference to support Gaza reconstruction. A new strategy for Gaza needs the engagement of all stakeholders. I very much hope that conditions will soon allow Egypt to continue playing its important role, including by resuming the stalled ceasefire talks and promoting Palestinian reconciliation.

I can honestly say that Gaza has consistently been a top priority for the United Nations, and for me personally. During each crisis, the United Nations, including through the personal involvement of the Secretary-General, was in the forefront to stop the fighting. Let me here also thank the United Nations family on the ground, particularly the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, for its indispensable role in picking up the pieces in the aftermath and for doing the important development and humanitarian work. The stark truth is that, despite all the efforts, Gaza is our collective failure and the people of Gaza continue to suffer the consequences.

Another lesson learned after seven years and three wars is that the Middle East peace process has mainly played out on three interconnected and mutually conflicting tracks: peace negotiations, Gaza, and the United Nations. The interplay of these three tracks has produced a dangerous outcome — I dare say the biggest crisis to date to our joint efforts to achieve a two-State solution. As I have noted in my briefings to the Council since May 2012, the parties are heading towards an outcome that I can only describe as a one-State reality.

As the parties do not appear at this point ready to recommence negotiations, we should not rush them back to the table. If indeed we believe that they do continue to seek an outcome of two neighbouring States living in peace and security, but are unable themselves at this juncture to agree on a meaningful framework to resume negotiations, the international community should seriously consider presenting such a framework for negotiations, including parameters, to achieve this. That may be the only way to preserve the goal of a two-State solution in the present circumstances.

Peace is first and foremost the responsibility of the parties to the conflict, but that reality cannot absolve international institutions of their responsibilities. For its part, the Quartet has largely failed to live up to expectations, although recent efforts to reinvigorate it, including through an enhanced role for regional stakeholders, may have a positive impact. It remains the primary responsibility of the Council to play its role in developing a new peace architecture for resolving the conflict at long last. Resolution 242 (1967), embodying the key principle of land for peace, is nearly half a century old. During my tenure — in my first year, actually — the Council adopted only two resolutions on Israel and Palestine, and neither of these provided a strategy. Has the time not come for the Council to lead?

In conclusion, let me express my appreciation for the dedicated work of the many staff members of the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, without whose efforts I could not have done my job. And further, I wish to convey my sincere gratitude to the Security Council and to the Secretary-General for all the support I have received over these eventful years. I could not have carried out my mission without their strong backing and, in particular, without their support for my maintaining contact — as the only peace envoy permanently on the ground — with all parties concerned, including, as appropriate, with non-State actors, such as Hamas. Goal-oriented contact with such interlocutors is an essential element for any envoy seeking peace in a complex, modern conflict.

Finally, to my successor, Nickolay Mladenov, I wish every success in dealing with this infinitely challenging environment.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Serry for his briefing, and reiterate our gratitude to him.

I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 10.45 a.m.

United Nations S/PV.7418

Security Council

Seventieth year

Provisional

7418th meeting
Thursday, 26 March 2015, 3 p.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Lamek	(France)
Members:	Angola	Mr. Lucas
	Chad	Mr. Gombo
	Chile	Mr. Barros Melet
	China	Mr. Liu Jieyi
	Jordan	Mr. Hmoud
	Lithuania	Ms. Murmokaite
	Malaysia	Mrs. Adnin
	New Zealand	Mrs. Schwalger
	Nigeria	Mr. Laro
	Russian Federation	Mr. Safronkov
	Spain	Mr. González de Linares Palou
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Mark Lyall Grant
	United States of America	Ms. Sison
	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	Mr. Ramírez Carreño

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East

Report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Security Council resolutions 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014) and 2191 (2014) (S/2015/206)

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15-08517 (E)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East

Report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Security Council resolutions 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014) and 2191 (2014) (S/2015/206)

The President (*spoke in French*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Ms. Valerie Amos, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2015/206, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Security Council resolutions 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014) and 2191 (2014).

I now give the floor to Ms. Amos.

Ms. Amos: We are in the fifth year of a war in Syria characterized by breathtaking levels of savagery, and it is just over one year since the Council adopted resolution 2139 (2014). The resolution demanded action by the parties to the conflict to cease attacks against civilians and facilitate humanitarian access to those in need. We all had hoped that the resolution would compel the parties to reduce the violence and lead to a significant improvement in the situation of people in Syria. By any measure, however, the situation in Syria has dramatically worsened.

Civilians continue to bear the brunt of the conflict. The Secretary-General has submitted report after report highlighting the failure of the parties to meet their basic minimum legal obligations. Indiscriminate aerial bombings, including the use of barrel bombs, car bombs, mortar attacks, unguided rockets and the use of other explosive devices in populated areas, are the hallmarks of this conflict.

Fighting continues to escalate across the country. Increased violence in Idlib city in the past few days is particularly worrying and has the potential to displace hundreds of thousands more people. I am concerned that civilians could become trapped in the city if the fighting escalates. People must be given safe passage and be allowed to leave if this becomes necessary.

I have previously reported on the worsening socioeconomic situation in the country, which has eroded the development gains made over a generation. Today, a Syrian's life expectancy is estimated to be 20 years less than when the conflict started. Unemployment is around 58 per cent, up from around 10 per cent in 2010; and nearly two thirds of all Syrians are now estimated to be living in extreme poverty.

The inability of the Council and countries with influence over the different parties at war in Syria to agree on the elements for a political solution in the country means that the humanitarian consequences will continue to be dire for millions of Syrians.

Children are particularly badly affected, with 5.6 million children now in need of assistance. Well over 2 million children are out of school. A quarter of Syria's schools have been damaged, destroyed or taken over for shelter. It will take billions of dollars to repair damaged schools and restore the education system.

Nutritional surveys indicate a worrying decline in the nutritional status of children. Three governorates — Hama, Aleppo and Deir-ez-Zor — have global acute malnutrition rates above 10 per cent among the children sampled, a level considered serious according to World Health Organization standards. The overall country-wide global acute malnutrition rate was 7.2 per cent. This is considered to be poor.

The health system in Syria has been destroyed. Only half of the network of primary health centres that existed before the conflict are still working. Physicians for Human Rights has documented 233 attacks on 183 medical facilities, with 610 medical staff killed over the last four years.

Basic services continue to be deliberately attacked and cut. For example, some 450,000 people in Dar'a had their water cut for two weeks in February. Even when basic services are restored, people have only sporadic access owing to the systematic degradation of basic infrastructure. Non-governmental organizations reviewing satellite imagery report that 83 per cent of

the lights have gone out in Syria over the past four years. This is an average. The cuts are even higher in areas such as Aleppo.

As needs grow, humanitarian organizations need to reach more people, but we are facing increasing difficulties in reaching the 4.8 million people who live in areas which are hard to reach. And as the violence escalates and conflict lines continue to shift, I fear that these numbers will rise. Access continues to be constrained by insecurity and active fighting, but the parties to the conflict are increasingly and deliberately obstructing the delivery of life-saving aid.

In parts of the country under the control of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), a number of humanitarian offices have been closed. As a result, the World Food Programme was forced to halt distribution to 700,000 people in ISIL-controlled areas of Aleppo, Al-Hasakeh, Deir ez-Zor and Raqqa governorates, and Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations distributions in the northern governorates — the agricultural belt of the country — have also been reduced in the past months.

The Syrian Government continues to put in place restrictive administrative hurdles, hampering the effective delivery of aid, and have insisted that the United Nations share beneficiary lists. In February, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs instructed the United Nations that all communications with Government ministries and public-service providers be routed through the Ministry. At a time when needs are growing and the humanitarian community should be scaling up its response, the Government continues to put in place measures that are not practical and slow down our response.

So far this year, the United Nations has requested access to 33 locations for the delivery of aid through inter-agency convoys; only three have been agreed, to Al Waer, Talbiseh and Al-Rastan in Homs. Despite the approval and support of the Governor, Syrian State security forces removed surgical and other medical and reproductive health supplies from the convoys to Al Waer and Talbiseh. Urgently needed medical supplies, including surgical kits, are scheduled to be delivered to Al-Rastan on 30 March. I ask the Council to make it clear to the Government of Syria that these convoys must be allowed to proceed and that their security forces should allow the free passage of all supplies to people in need.

There has been some confusion about the number of people in besieged and hard-to-reach locations. In besieged areas, people cannot leave and assistance cannot get in on a regular basis. In February, the United Nations could not deliver any food or medicines to besieged locations. The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) restarted delivery of some assistance to Yarmouk on 4 March. However, food distribution takes place only three times a week, with around 200 families receiving parcels on each distribution day. UNRWA estimates that the 18,000 people trapped in Yarmouk require 400 food parcels daily to meet their basic needs. An additional 228,000 people are now living under siege in Government-controlled neighborhoods of Deir ez-Zor by ISIL. They are unable to leave the city, and only minimal supplies have been airlifted in by the Government. This increases the total number of people besieged in Syria from 212,000 to an estimated 440,000.

This situation cannot continue: 185,500 people are in areas besieged by the Government, despite its assertions that it has a responsibility to look after its own people. The rest are in areas besieged by armed and terrorist groups. The authority of the Council is being undermined. People trapped in besieged locations are becoming more and more desperate. We must be allowed to deliver essential humanitarian items, such as food, nutritional supplies for children, medicines and medical items. Time is running out. More people will die.

The United Nations and its humanitarian partners continue to do everything we can to try to save lives, and we are still getting aid to millions of people each month, including through cross-border operations. The pledging conference in Kuwait on 31 March will be an opportunity to raise some of the resources required to maintain our life-saving work. I encourage Governments to give generously.

We also need the Council's continued strong support in the following areas. They should remain strong advocates for compliance with international humanitarian and human rights law; and make it clear that parties to the conflict, including the Government, which bears a special responsibility as a Member of the United Nations, cannot act with impunity. On the issue of denial of access, where parties arbitrarily withhold consent to relief operations there must be consequences and accountability. Council members may wish to

consider the concrete steps they would like to take given the violations of the Council's demands on access set out in resolution 2139 (2014). And on the repeated targeting of health facilities and personnel, the Syrian armed forces, non-State armed groups and terrorist groups must be held accountable for their actions.

Day after day, month after month, year after year, the death, destruction and violence in Syria grows. As Council members have said many times, there is no humanitarian solution to the crisis. The international community must demonstrate greater determination to reach a long-overdue political solution.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank Ms. Amos for her briefing.

I now give the floor to the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic.

Mr. Ja'afari (Syrian Arabic Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): The statements made by some Member States before the Council as well as elsewhere, as well as statements by the Secretary-General himself, continue to stress that there is there can be no humanitarian or military solution to the crisis in Syria. We agree with that suggestion in principal because the humanitarian suffering cannot be ended in full by providing some humanitarian assistance in one region or another. This is despite the fact that we fully understand the need for providing such humanitarian assistance and the important role that it has to play in alleviating suffering in the areas affected. However, we differ with some States in as far as we believe that this suggestion should not be limited to words but that those words should be associated with serious and responsible action and that the matter should be discussed in a holistic manner. This has its own consequences, including the following.

First, we should discuss the main reason for the emergence of the humanitarian crisis in Syria, which is primarily the widespread terrorist phenomenon being supported by outside forces. However, and regrettably, instead of that, some States are attempting to dissociate the phenomenon of terrorism from the humanitarian situation in Syria so as to prolong the crisis and the two issues as separate, with a view to blackmailing the Syrian Government under the pretext of repercussions. This is in addition to attempts to avoid shouldering responsibility, in particular in implementing Security Council resolutions on combating terrorism, including resolutions 2170 (2014), 2178 (2014) and 2199 (2015).

Can we call the actions of some States, including Qatar, Saudi Arabia and Turkey, in spending billions of dollars in supporting and financing terrorism, which has been condemned by the Security Council, anything like concern over the humanitarian situation in Syria? Is it not the epitome of hypocrisy, while the 2015 Syria response plan did not receive even 9 per cent of the requested funding and the regional response plan for refugees received less than 6 per cent?

I would like to draw the attention of Council members to the fact that the cost of international staff and their skyrocketing salaries usually comes at the expense of the beneficiaries — those who are benefiting from humanitarian assistance in Syria. We therefore call on the Secretary-General to submit a report on that topic.

Secondly, a political solution should be supported through a Syrian-led intra-Syrian dialogue. As such, the Syrian Government continues to combat terrorism and, in parallel, is seeking to achieve a political solution. It openly and positively participated in the consultative meeting held in Moscow in January, and intends to participate in the second Moscow meeting, scheduled to be held within two weeks.

The Government has also responded positively to the proposal made by Mr. de Mistura, in accordance with the information he conveyed in his briefing to the Council last month, in the hope that such a proposal can contribute to improving the humanitarian situation in Syria. However, the terrorist groups and their driving force — which includes States — are the ones who refused to implement the proposal of Mr. de Mistura. Still some members of this Council refuse to address this negative aspect with the attention and follow-up that it deserves.

The report of the Secretary-General before us (S/2015/168) has many shortcomings and gross misrepresentations. I shall, by way of example, discuss some of them.

We noticed that the report depended in many of the charges levelled at the Syrian Government on what it calls "reports". However, the report is Secretary-General failed to disclose the sources of those reports or their credibility and worthiness. Secondly, the report says that the United Nations sought access to 33 besieged or hard-to-reach areas. However, the United Nations was denied access to 31 areas and is still waiting authorization to access others. I would also like

to say that, making such proposals in this poisonous manner is political and misleading, and that it fails to convey the full picture. The situation is as follows.

In the second half of February, the field offices of the United Nations in Homs, Aleppo and Tartus sent those 33 requests to the governors of the areas directly without the Resident Coordinator's Office sending any such information to the main focal point in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. The Ministry learned about this later on from then United Nations on 9 March, one month later. This is against standard procedures, whereby delivering assistance to hard-to-reach areas requires prior agreement between the United Nations and Syria. That requires a meeting of the joint Syrian-United Nations commission to discuss the details with regard to requests by the United Nations to provide assistance, in particular regarding then roads to be followed according to the security situation as well as assessing the number of beneficiaries and the distribution points so that we can guarantee the safe delivery of assistance material.

Despite all of this, the Syrian Government was ready to facilitate the operation of the convoys whenever possible, provided that such assistance would not end up in the ends of terrorist groups, in addition to guaranteeing the safety and security of humanitarian workers.

Thirdly, the report states that the Syrian Government is attacking the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) in some cities and towns, which refutes some of the naïve assertions made by some of my colleagues in the Council to the effect that the Syrian Government is not fighting ISIS. That is something we have heard many times in the Council. However, despite all of the foregoing, the report of the Secretary-General claims that such attacks led to the killing of civilians and the destruction of infrastructure. The question that must be posed here is how could the authors verify their authenticity of reports in areas controlled by ISIS unless the sources were the Chechen Abu-Usama, the Saudi Abu-Moussab, the Libyan Abu-Suhaib, the British Abu-John or the Jordanian Abu-Abdullah? What adds insult to injury is that the report does not even attempt to discuss the loss of life and the destruction of Syria's infrastructure caused by the international coalition's raids.

The report says that the Syrian Government declared three of its staff persona non grata. But the question that should be asked here is what really is the mandate that the UNICEF personnel are working under in this case? The question I have for those who are quick to criticize the Syrian Government's decision is about the relationships that the UNICEF employee had to other groups in Aleppo. Why would he contact the armed groups without the knowledge of the Syrian Government? Is there any justification for the continued demands of another staff member wanting to know the location of the Syrian army or the kinds of weapons being used in Aleppo? Did the supervisor of those two staff members explain that paragraph sub-paragraph 35 (d) of the annex to General Assembly resolution 46/182 requires of United Nations staff working in humanitarian assistance that they obtain the consent, inter alia, of the host Government, in particular here the Syrian Government, the principal party with which they should be in touch in order to ensure their access to emergency areas.

The drafters of the report persist in blaming the Syrian Government for laying siege to some areas and preventing humanitarian access to them. However, the report fails to explain how weapons and ammunition can continue to reach those regions or how come those weapons are used to launch indiscriminate rocket attacks and other terrorist attacks in safe areas. The fact is that those are areas that are under siege from inside by armed terrorist groups, and it is they who are preventing humanitarian assistance from getting access — or, if they allow it to enter, they steal the aid. The report did not discuss the negative consequences for the humanitarian situation in Syria resulting from the coordinated unilateral measures imposed on the Syrian people.

I would like to stress that the Syrian Government is committed to meeting its responsibilities with regard to alleviating the humanitarian suffering of its people. We are willing to take every possible measure to achieve that. We are willing to cooperate with the United Nations and facilitate its work, but such cooperation is not a one-way street. In return, the United Nations must commit to abiding by its guiding principles in providing humanitarian assistance. It must cooperate with the Syrian Government, coordinate its actions with the Government and consult with the Government regarding the various humanitarian situations, rather than attacking it with unconstructive criticism. The United Nations and various humanitarian organizations have succeeded in providing humanitarian assistance

to more than 4 million Syrians every month inside Syria's territory, thanks to the Syrian Government's cooperation.

In conclusion, I would like to say that the people under siege in Syria number not 440,000 but the 23 million citizens of Syria, who are suffering under the various coercive measures and sanctions imposed by the European Union and the United States, among others.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now invite Council members to informal consultation to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 3.35 p.m.